

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting of the above referenced subcommittee held on Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in Conference Room #5, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Committee members present were: Deputy Mayor Schulman, Councilors Rivers, Hypolite, Neuwirth and DeLorenzo

Also present were: Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Town Manager, India Rodgers, Clerk of Council and Jose Giner, Director of Planning & Economic Development

Absent was: Councilor Washington

Guest were: Mr. John McFadden, Post Road Residential and Mr. Michael Goman, Goman & York

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

Presentation by Post Road Residential – Center Apartments Status Update

Mr. John McFadden, Developer with Post Road Residential gave a status update and timeline for the Center Apartments new build located on Jerome and Bloomfield Avenues:

- June 22, 2016 – Closing acquisition on land
- July 11, 2016 – Wetland permit issued
- August 3, 2016 – Completed construction drawings (finalized)
- August 5, 2016 – Demolition permit issued for majority of site work. There were some issues with the state traffic administration regarding the intersection of Jerome Avenue and Bloomfield Avenue. Post Road has a \$225,000 bond up for potential work
- September 23, 2016 – Foundation work will begin for the next 3 months. Framing will begin mid-November. The Construction loan closing will September 30, 2016 with Citizens Bank.
- August 2017 - Tentative leasing of first units

The general contractor chosen is Plumb House, Inc. of Milford, MA. This minority owned business specializes in wood frame and cast-in-place multi-family housing, including new construction, rehabilitation and historic rehabilitation.

Mr. McFadden stated that Post Road attended the Blue Hills Civic Association – Job Fair in May 2016 to solicit interest of minority contractors.

City, Inc. Associates and other community organizations marketing to local contractors. The team will select subcontractors and then hold a job fair for various trades. An updated contract list will be provided as the project progresses. The plan is to hold another job fair for 60 days.

Mr. McFadden reported that Post Road Residential reached 35.83% minority track on Guaranteed Maximum Pricing (GMP) contracts for this project.

Councilor Hypolite requested to specify statistics distinguished from female contractors and other minorities.

Post Road Residential reported that additional meetings were also held with:

- Capital Workforce Partners
- Hartford Jobs Funnel
- CRT Education Program – to host students learning the construction trade

In addition to promoting minority contractor involvement with this project, Mr. McFadden also reported that other recovery efforts are being made on site. They have acquired an environmental consultant to review all efficiency green programs including a possible Solar Panel project.

During the demolition process, the wood on site will be reclaimed on new site. In addition, trees and shrubs were donated to local organizations or businesses in town as well as a donation of steel pre-fabs were delivered to the Wintonbury Land Trust.

Deputy Mayor Schulman also suggested contacting WKND Radio, Bloomfield Access TV, Inquirer News and the West Indian American local newspapers for further outreach of minority outlets.

An information session regarding job opportunities was held at Town Hall in June 2016.

Presentation by Goman & York – Recent Economic Development Efforts

Mr. Michael Goman of Goman & York gave a brief overview of recent Economic Development efforts in town.

Goman & York is a multi-disciplinary team of experienced economic development and commercial real estate professionals.

The practice areas of focus for Goman & York include:

Economic Development

- Policy and Regulatory issues – updates and improvements
- Corporate business: identification, attraction, direct contact/solicitation and development
- Local business development and retention
- Marketing to attract new businesses

They also perform general duties such as:

- Communication with existing property owners to fill vacancies and/or possible developments of available land
- Attend monthly EDC meetings and assist with numerous issues including mission statement, goals and objectives
- Attend Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce events
- Implementation of goals and objectives of the Plan of Conservation & Development

In addition to these services, Dr. Don Poland provides policy and regulatory consultant advice in the following areas:

- Provided technical support to the Library Building Committee for the evaluation of a future library site
- Regulatory revisions drafted and recommended to the EDC regarding alcohol separation distances in the Town Center Zoning District

- Ongoing research and assessment of parking requirements and management for the Town Center
- Preliminary review of tax abatement procedures
- Review of Plan of Conservation and Development agenda document

Mr. Dave Driver focuses on Corporate Business Development aspects of service:

- 19 business visits plus 8 business recruitment efforts, totally 27 visits
- Assisted the following business to establish in Bloomfield:
 - ABB Robotics – new research center off of Blue Hills Avenue
 - Niagara Bottling – analyzing and selecting Woodland Avenue site
 - Buffalo Steel – reclaiming Metal Improvements on Filley Street
 - Total Wall Systems – state incentives to move from Branford, CT to Britton Drive in Bloomfield
 - Swift Textile Metalizing – received a special award from Lockheed Martin Aeronautics for being one of the giant aerospace firm's Top 25 Suppliers

Mr. Rob Rowson focuses on Local Business Development aspects of service:

- The creation of the Bloomfield Center Business Alliance (BBA) – 20-40 attendees meet monthly
- Attracting more members special social meeting are being held, a shopping brochure and logo have also been created
- Produce BBA flyer each month and hand deliver to businesses.

Mr. Giner met with Mr. Michael Freeman from Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) regarding the Blue Hills Avenue corridor and streetscape project. In addition, Mr. Giner also met with Mr. Ralph Knighton, Executive Board member of the Blue Hills Civic Association to discuss plans in conjunction with the City of Hartford initiative for this area.

Councilor DeLorenzo inquired about a designated area identified in Bloomfield that would benefit from Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Tax increment financing (TIF) is a public financing method that is used as a subsidy for redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects. Approximately \$50,000 is the estimated cost to create a district at the conceptual level on what should be included in a proposed project.

Councilor Rivers inquired about Goman & York assist the newly formed 330 Park Avenue – Human Services building committee with in-house design ideas and options.

Mr. Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Town Manager stated the Human Service building committee is going out on RFP for architectural services. It was noted that Goman & York only became involved with the Prosser Library project due to the location in Town Center and possible repurposing the existing site.

In addition, Mr. Schenck, Jr. asked Mr. McFadden and Mr. Goman to provide a status report quarterly to the Land Use & Economic Development subcommittee meetings.

Councilor Hypolite requested to narrow the discussion to deliverables and justify the expense of having a multi-disciplinary team versus a private consultant. He would like the focus to be on actual retentions and attractions. In addition, Councilor Hypolite requested data on the TIF concept and its implementation in the area.

Councilor DeLorenzo inquired about the status of the old Valco property. Mr. Giner reported that the owner has requested a text amendment with Town Plan and Zoning (TPZ) for a tentative project, 40 unit apartment complex.

Review and Discussion regarding the Tax Abatement Policy

Mr. Giner presented a draft framework outline for a Tax Abatement Policy for the Town of Bloomfield. He also stated that the current town website has been updated to include tax abatement background materials. He also discussed revisions in the new Senate Bill No. 502, referencing tax assessments and length of time permitted by municipalities. Mr. Giner provided tax abatement samples from other area towns similar to demographics of the town.

Deputy Mayor Schulman and Councilor Hypolite stated that this framework is a good outline for evaluating and creation of a tax abatement policy. They also suggested adding a definition to the outline.

Councilor DeLorenzo inquired about governance, length of time for abatement, percentage of abatement, existing abatement policy (framework and elements). He requested additional information be provided with a summary of other similar towns with recommendations on what is appropriate for Bloomfield.

Councilor Hypolite inquired about the next steps in policy creation and timeframes.

Deputy Mayor Schulman requested a project status from Mr. Giner at the next scheduled Land Use & Economic Development subcommittee meeting, Tuesday, October 18, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

Council Referred Item – FY 15/16-85: Discussion and Possible Action regarding Certified Local Government Designation for Historic Preservation

It was moved by Councilor Hypolite, seconded by Councilor Rivers and voted unanimously to recommend to the full Council to approve an application for Certified Local Government Designation for Historic Preservation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

1. **Kevin Gough, 5 Bear Ridge Drive** inquired about the role of Mr. Joseph Suggs in efforts to solicit minority contractors relative to paid commission fees for services rendered with Post Road Residential. It was noted that Mr. Suggs is a representative for the Minority Contractors Council. The goal of this organization is to increase the number and grow the capacity of minority construction firms based in the State of Connecticut so they can successfully compete in the short-term and long-term construction marketplace.

Mr. Gough also gave feedback regarding the proposed framework for the tax abatement policy. The environmental criteria and impact study should be mandatory for any building design as well as for energy efficiency. In addition, any design criteria should be reviewed by TPZ for approval.

2. **Bonnie Bercowetz, 488 Park Avenue** inquired about the vitality, demand and amount of apartment development in the last two years in Bloomfield.

Mr. McFadden stated that the apartment development marketplace is very strong. He gave a brief update on apartment data and statistics for the Greater Hartford area.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Councilor DeLorenzo, seconded by Councilor Hypolite and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of May 17, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Councilor Hypolite, seconded by Councilor Rivers and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.